

Assembly Speaker pro Tempore  
Christine Kehoe  
Chair

Senator Sheila James Kuehl  
Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg  
Assemblymember John Laird  
Assemblymember Mark Leno



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## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, & TRANSGENDER (LGBT) CAUCUS

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### **SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES HISTORIC DOMESTIC PARTNER MEASURES**

**Sacramento, CA** -- The Judiciary Committee of the California State Senate endorsed two landmark bills earlier this afternoon that would provide significant rights and responsibilities to registered domestic partners in California and reduce discrimination in the workplace.

AB 205, by Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles), would grant registered domestic partners nearly all the state rights, benefits, and responsibilities currently granted only to spouses under state law. AB 17, by Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Christine Kehoe (D-San Diego), would prohibit state agencies from contracting with businesses that discriminate in providing benefits to an employee with a spouse and employee with a registered domestic partners.

Both measures passed with a 5 - 1 vote. All five Democrats in the committee supported both bills. They are Senator Martha Escutia, committee chair, and Senators Gil Cedillo, Denise Moreno Ducheny, Sheila James Kuehl, and Byron Sher. Republican Senator Dick Ackerman opposed both legislation.

"The rights and responsibilities being extended under AB 205 will further the state's interest in promoting stable and committed family relationships," said Assemblymember Goldberg. "This bill will protect family members from the economic and social consequences of abandonment, separation, the death of loved ones, and other life crises. It will also protect couples, the children they are raising, third parties, and the state from numerous harms and costs."

"The State of California does not discriminate in providing benefits to employees who are married or in a domestic partnership," said Assemblymember Kehoe. "This policy affirms California's commitment to equality. AB 17 promotes that principle by ensuring that our state should only do business with contractors that are willing to make the same commitment to equality."

Both bills are sponsored by Equality California working in coalition with Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund and the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Support for both bills came from a long list of elected officials, businesses, civil rights and human rights organizations, labor groups, faith-based community, health, legal, and social services providers, and groups representing children, communities of color, seniors, women, and the LGBT community.

AB 205 and AB 17 constitute half of the legislative priorities of the newly formed California Legislative Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Caucus. The other two priority bills previously approved by Senate policy committees are Assemblymember Mark Leno's AB 196, prohibiting gender-based discrimination in employment and housing, and Assemblymember Judy Chu's AB 458, the Foster Care Anti-Discrimination Act of 2003. The California State Assembly previously approved all four bills. AB 205 is up next in Senate Revenue & Taxation Committee on Wednesday, July 9. The other three bills are headed over to Senate Appropriations Committee for fiscal consideration and will likely be heard in the next few weeks.

The California Legislative LGBT Caucus was originally formed in June 2002. The members include Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Christine Kehoe, the Caucus chair, Senator Sheila James Kuehl, and Assemblymembers Jackie Goldberg, John Laird, and Mark Leno. The caucus' role is to present a forum for the California Legislature to discuss issues that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Californians and to further the goal of equality and justice for ALL Californians. The LGBT Caucus' formation made California the first state in the country to recognize an official caucus of openly-LGBT state legislators.

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